



Postdocs Enjoy a Night Out in San Francisco



By Andre Schleife

Wikipedia says that “Studio 54 was a highly popular discotheque from 1977 until 1991, located at 254 West 54th Street in Manhattan, New York, USA.” On January 28th, LLNL postdocs and their friends were able to get a feel of what this popular discotheque must have been like back in the day. This Postdoc Association event offered the opportunity to come out to the city on a Saturday night and enjoy a fun evening of dancing.

A total of eight people made it and we met at about 9 pm in a bar called “Butter” in the SoMa area of San Francisco. The group enjoyed some beverages and got eased into the partying mood while listening to the music mix provided at “Butter” (see all of us in the first picture). With the time approaching 11 pm all of us decided to cross the street and get into the DNA lounge, not knowing that this club was running a “Studio 54”

theme that night. Luckily, we didn’t have to share the destiny of Warren Beatty, Woody Allen, or Frank Sinatra who, according to Wikipedia, were unable to get into the club on opening night.

As we got in, we all received a free CD with some of the songs played during the night and we found the dance floor already filled with lots of people in all sorts of costumes. The crowd was very fun and colorful and so were the decorations—for example, the balloon octopi floating in midair. All of this set stage for a night full of dancing to a music mashup from the 70’s, 80’s, and today’s hits. Everyone had a wonderful time working their dancing shoes and, after leaving the location at about 1:30 am, made it home safely with lots of good memories and the idea of “Studio 54”. Thanks everyone and see you out again soon!

Next Steps: Interviews with Former Postdocs

When did you end your Post-Doc at LLNL?

Dietmar Ebner: That was in October 2010 after having worked slightly more than a year as a Post-Doc in Computing/CASC.

Where do you work now and how is that similar or different from what you did as a Post-Doc?

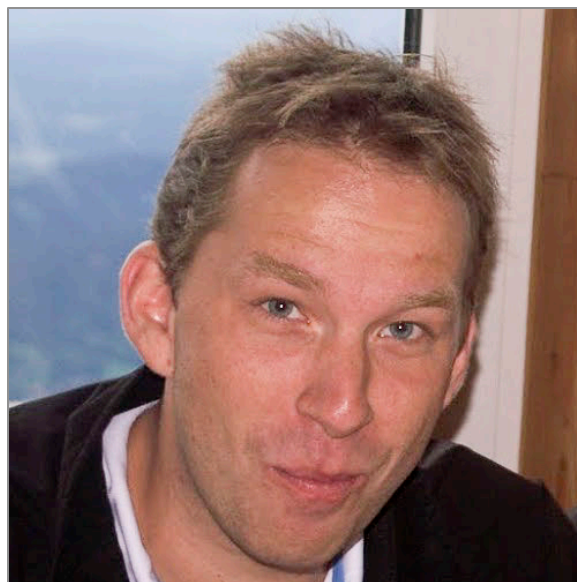
I now work as a Software Engineer at Google in Mountain View. Surprisingly, what I do is not all that different from what I did before in academia except that a) publishing work plays a very minor role now and b) I changed the field from compilers to machine learning, something I've always been interested in.

Did you apply elsewhere? Why did you make this choice (Lab vs. academia vs. industry)?

I wasn't actively looking for a job. Instead, I got a cold call from a recruiter because some of my previous publications were relevant to Google. I did the interview mainly out of curiosity, one thing led to another, and here I am now. So no, I did not apply anywhere else. That said, Google is one of the few companies I could imagine working for at this point, largely because the culture is very similar to academia, i.e. engineers enjoy a lot of freedom in choosing their projects and work is very self-directed and open.

What did you enjoy the most and the least about being a PD at LLNL? What do you think are the differences between a PD at the lab versus at a University?

I think the great thing about LLNL is the willingness and capability to tackle very large and risky projects with potentially high reward. It's very hard if not impossible to get this kind of funding and resources at Universities. The lab is probably one of the best places I can imagine for inter-disciplinary work on a large scale. I think what I disliked the most was the bureaucracy and security overhead, partially caused by me being a foreign national. The type of work I did at LLNL could just as well be performed outside the fence, which



would make collaboration much easier. Also, things like international travel was unnecessarily complicated and the costs were artificially inflated making it somewhat harder to attend international conferences and the like.

Can you describe the application and interview process? How did you get your new job? What do you think your employer valued the most in your formation and experience? I think the interview process at Google is well documented elsewhere so I'll concentrate on the latter part of the question. The one thing that stands out here from my point of view is the ability to learn new things quickly. Very few people will work all their life in a narrow field making the ability to generalize their knowledge and to become an expert in a related or new area in a short amount of time invaluable.

Any piece of advice for PDs at LLNL?

It takes a lot of hours to become really really good at something so make sure it's something you like. Also, avoid the cafeteria!

Judges Needed for the Alameda County Science & Engineering Fair

The Alameda County Science and Engineering Fair (ACSEF) needs judges to participate from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, March 21 at Chabot College in Hayward. Lunch will be provided. This is an opportunity for postdocs to serve as role models for budding schoolchildren scientists. As a judge you will get to know the students, review and rank their projects and promote science careers. This is the first year of the ACSEF. More info is online at www.acsef.org/judgeregistration.html

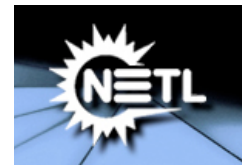
Postdocs who are interested in being a judge should check with their mentors first.



Postdoc-Related Highlights from Notes to the Director

Work on methane hydrates highlighted in NETL newsletter

A paper by **Wyatt Dufrane** and colleagues from the U.S. Geological Survey and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography that appeared in the May 11 electronic edition of Geophysical Research Letters (GRL) was featured in the 2011 edition of Fire in the Ice, the National Energy Technology Laboratory's (NETL) Methane Hydrate R&D Program Newsletter. The GRL paper presents the first-ever electrical conductivity measurements on unmixed CH₄ hydrate and reported that the conductivity was $\sim 6 \times 10^{-5}$ S/m at 5 °C, which is ~ 5 orders of magnitude lower than seawater. This difference allows electromagnetic (EM) techniques to distinguish highly resistive gas hydrate deposits from conductive water-saturated sediments in EM field surveys.



NIF User Group Meets to Discuss NIF Research Opportunities

About 170 scientists, students, and **postdoctoral researchers**, representing 20 nations, attended the first NIF User Group meeting held at LLNL on February 12-15 to discuss fundamental science research opportunities at NIF. Current and potential users in the self-organized User Group heard presentations covering the unprecedented power and precision of the NIF lasers, the facility's sophisticated diagnostic equipment, target fabrication, and experimental platform capabilities, and the wide range of scientific experiments already under way or in preparation on NIF, as well as related research being performed at LLNL's Jupiter Laser Facility and the OMEGA laser at the University of Rochester. Justin Wark, University of Oxford professor and User Group interim chair, said the interest shown at the meeting in using NIF for basic science "is evidence of the great enthusiasm that the academic base has for using such a unique machine, and their recognition that it will enable scientific enquiries that are simply impossible elsewhere."

Directors Tour LLESA Children's Center

Parney Albright and Tom Gioconda visited the children and staff at the LLESA Children's Center on February 23. They received a tour of the facility, including some cool play structures, did some quality teambuilding and also some possible long-term recruiting! Pictured below are some of the children they got to play with who attend the Center; Laura Reno, the Center's Director; and Steve Goodman, LLESA's General Director.



Professional & Career Development

Fighting Akrasia, Part 2:

Jerry Seinfeld's Productivity Secret. Back in January I introduced the concept of Akrasia (not doing what you know that you should be doing). Seinfeld's way to fight it is to set a goal, do it every day, and mark your calendar with an "x" when you reach your goal. Then you try to go as long as possible without breaking the chain. I find that this works really well. I first used it when I was writing my Ph.D. dissertation and now I've adapted this for each of my major projects using the Compact Calendar, creating a "Seinfeld progress tracker" to push me to make daily progress:

COMPACT CALENDAR									2012		Project 1					Project 2				
#	MONTH	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	M	T	W	R	F		
52	January	26	27	28	29	30	31	01												
1		02	03	04	05	06	07	08	-	-	x	-	-	x	x	x	x			
2		09	10	11	12	13	14	15	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
3		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			
4		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	x		
5	February	30	31	01	02	03	04	05	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
6		06	07	08	09	10	11	12	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	-		

I love it! Give it a try — it might work for you too!

—Nathan Kugland

lifehacker.com/281626/jerry-seinfelds-productivity-secret
davidseah.com/compact-calendar/

Upcoming Events

Postdoc Brown Bag Seminar: Livermore Open Campus

Thursday, March 8th, 12 – 1:15 PM

LVOC High Performance Computing Innovation Center, Yosemite Room 1115. Recent activities & future plans for academic and entrepreneurial opportunities.

High Energy Density Science Seminar

Thursday, March 15, 1 PM

B481 Auditorium. Refreshments served. Nat Fisch, Princeton University: "Unusual Wave Compression Effects in Plasma"

Physics & Life Sciences Postdoc Research Seminar

Tuesday, March 20, 11 AM

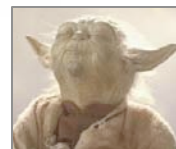
B151 R1209 (Stevenson Room). Refreshments served. Miranda Sarachine (AEED) and Yelena Sholokhova (AEED)

In Other News...

Terrible Teacher & Mentor, Top 10 Reasons Yoda Was

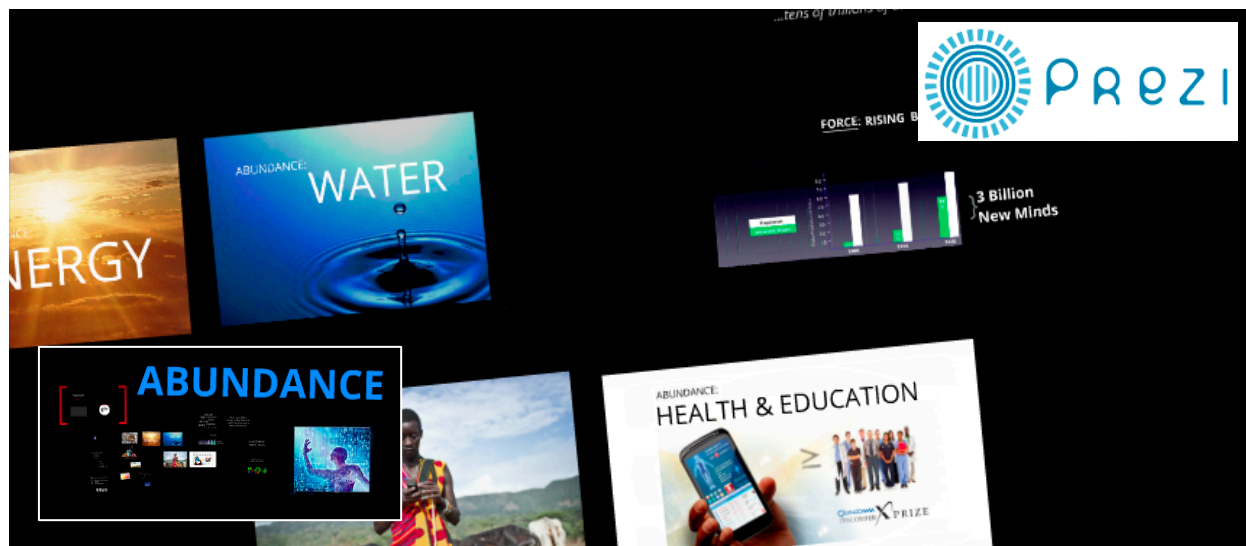
Number 9: Lack of transparency. Okay, so I get that force is complicated and dangerous. You can't possibly explain everything there is to know about it in one sitting. But telling your mentee some basic information ... should be pretty high on your [list].

www.geekwire.com/2011/terrible-teacher-mentor-top-10-reasons-yoda



Zooming Presentations with Prezi

Imagine flying through slides, zooming in and out from one to another, rotating along the way. Prezi is an online platform for making such presentations. It's an interesting idea, and I found it to be quite entertaining, although it looks to be a lot of work and is probably best suited for "ballroom" style talks that don't need a lot of detail. Shown here is a static view of the very well done "Abundance: The Future is Better Than You Think" by Peter Diamandis at TED Active 2012. See more and fly through the data yourself at prezi.com. —Nathan Kugland



Selected Recent Research Publications by LLNL Postdocs

Bold = LLNL Postdoc. *Broadcast your achievements! Make new connections & help show how we are doing collectively.*

Guidelines: 1) Peer-reviewed publications only, nothing in progress; 2) Your affiliation must be LLNL; 3) Prepare a standard-format citation with all authors (no *et al*), the full title, and journal/proceedings info; 4) Note which authors are LLNL postdocs, and in what division & group; 5) Send all of this to Nathan (kugland1@llnl.gov).

Computation/CAR/CASC: Martin Schulz, **Abhinav Bhatele**, Peer-Timo Bremer, Todd Gamblin, Katherine Isaacs, Joshua Levine, and Valerio Pascucci, "Creating a Tool Set for Optimizing Topology-aware Node Mappings," in the 5th ZIH Parallel Tools Workshop, Dresden, Germany, September 26-27 2011. LLNL-CONF-402937.

Computing/CASC: **Lashuk, I.V.**, Vassilevski, P.S., "Element agglomeration coarse Raviart-Thomas spaces with improved approximation properties," Numerical Linear Algebra with Applications 19, 414 (2012)

PLS/Physics/Computational Nuclear Physics Group: J. Wasem, "Lattice QCD calculation of nuclear parity violation," Phys. Rev. C 85, 022501 (2012), URL <http://link.aps.org/doi/10.1103/PhysRevC.85.022501>

PLS/Physics/Nuclear Physics: **A. Chyzh**, C. Y. Wu, **E. Kwan**, R. A. Henderson, **J. M. Gostic**, T. A. Bredeweg, R. C. Haight, A. C. Hayes-Sterbenz, M. Jandel, J. M. O'Donnell, and J. L. Ullmann, "Evidence for the stochastic aspect of prompt gamma emission in spontaneous fission," Phys. Rev. C 85, 021601 (2012)

Postdoc Lunch at Taqueria Consuelito on February 24th



We had 15 people in attendance. Thanks to Chris Plechaty, Paul Martinez, Tammy Olson, David Martinez, Charles Reid, Nick Be, Tanim Islam, Yu-hsin Chen, Nathan Kugland, and 7 others for participating. So many turned out that we needed a second table (not shown).

Our next lunch will take place in March. Hope to see you there!

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